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There he arriving, round about doth fly,
And takes survey with busie, curious eye,
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly.—SPENSER.

(*For the Indicator.*)

THE SPIRIT SEER.

As thick and numberless as the gay notes
That people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams.

“THEN, in respect to spiritual agency, you are disposed to agree with the visionary Swede,” said Doctor Alfman to Professor Risberg.

“I am inclined to believe in spiritual agency certainly,” replied Risbergh, “but not exactly upon the plan or principles of Swedenburgh.”

“You astonish me, my good friend; these are flights to which I supposed the calm rationality of your mental composition would never allow you to aspire. I am now convinced that man often varies less from his fellows than from himself, at different stages of his progress. For a vague admission, ‘that millions of spirits unseen *may* walk the earth,’ I can pardon a philosopher of any school, but a systematic confidence in the fact from my ancient fellow-student Risberg, I did not expect.”

“Very likely; but suppose I give you the history of my conversion?”

“With all my heart.”

“My story will commence very much in the manner of that of Aboulcasem of Basra, by a coffee-house adventure. You are aware that soon after I left college, I was engaged to finish the education and superintend the conduct of Albert Von F. the second son of the Count Von F., who headed the rich and noble Saxon family of that distinguished name?”

“I am, and recollect that your letters to me, without descending to particulars, expressed some dissatisfaction with that engagement.”

“My uneasiness originated from a very common cause: my pupil, although a younger son, was of very great importance to his family, owing to the sickly constitution of his elder brother. Their extreme solicitude for his welfare and improvement was, in consequence, attended by an excess of indulgence which went far to render it fruitless. Albert, at that time about twenty, was a young man of great quick-

ness and vivacity; ardent and romantic in temper, and, for one brought up with the highest German notions of the unassailable superiority of rank, kind, courteous, and condescending. He had passed through his college courses with credit, and even with eclat; and might have been still more distinguished but for a defect most perplexing to a tutor, and unpromising to future eminence,—he was capricious and unstable in all his resolves, and uniformly the slave of the last impression. This unfortunate habit, the fruit, in a great degree, of a mother's weakness, was not unperceived by Count von F., who was thereby induced to assign him a director, somewhat later than usual, in the hope that close observation might counteract a mental imperfection so destructive to respectability of character. Imagine my situation as the ostensible governor of a young man of quality, with this quicksilver temperament, in a city like Dresden. I was a thousand times on the point of giving up a charge so onerous and so irksome, but was still prevented by the ingenuous temper of my wayward pupil,—his frank acknowledgment of error, and repeated promises of amendment. At length I was so much chagrined at the facility with which he was led into some dangerous excesses by certain libertines of a riper age than his own, who clearly cherished designs both upon his purse and his principles, that I finally determined to retire from a superintendence so useless and disagreeable."

"But why not state your apprehensions to the Count von F.?"

"I had done so more than once; but whether he thought my notions too rigid, or was led by the Countess, who was avowedly of that opinion, I know not; he certainly never backed my authority and remonstrances with desirable energy, and I could not bring myself to follow the very common example of receiving remuneration, and courting patronage, for duties that it was impossible to perform. Still the resolution to resign a post, which, under different circumstances, might have been at once honourable and advantageous, cost me many hours of bitter cogitation. The day in particular, which ultimately determined me, was one of very gloomy and distressing reflection; so much so, that when the evening arrived, I found myself impelled to escape from my own thoughts, by repairing to a neighbouring coffee-house; where I occasionally met a few learned and literary characters, who resorted thither for the amusement of conversation, and the perusal of the public journals.

"Among the guests who frequented this coffee-house, was an elderly Hungarian—a man of lofty demeanour, of severe but handsome countenance, and of very reserved manners. His erudition was considerable, and he seldom broke silence but to display it, by pronouncing upon some point of learned difference. At such moments he not only evinced immense research, but a peculiarity in its application, which always excited considerable interest. From the whimsical tenor of some of his remarks, and his evident leaning towards mysticism, the wits who attended the coffee-house usually spoke of him to one another under the title of the Rosicrucian. This remarkable personage happened to be present, during the evening of the day on which I had worked myself to the important decision of quitting the family of Von F.; and as occasional observation will involuntarily receive a tinge from internal disquiet, without alluding to the cause, I insensibly turned the

discourse of the company upon that perplexing instability of temper, which had caused myself so much anxiety. As I felt the subject intensely, I was more than usually animated, and had, I fear, somewhat splenetically summed up, that it was most likely a constitutional defect, arising out of faulty organization, when I was suddenly startled by an emphatic '*humph!*' from the stranger.

" ' You seem to differ with me, Sir. '

" ' I do. '

" ' You will oblige me by stating exactly in what manner. '

" ' That is not so easily done, unless you were acquainted with much of which you are ignorant. '

" ' I am answered. '

" ' I wish not to offend; but when I add, that I only mean to state your absolute want of acquaintance with the great *spiritual* agency by which the human will is governed, you will regard the imputation of ignorance as a compliment. '

" The foregoing observation was made in a dry caustic manner, and something like a smile lighted up the dark eye of the speaker.

" ' If you suppose, ' replied I, ' that I deem ignorance of any thing honourable, you are mistaken. I am quite satisfied that we can know little of human nature, without an acquaintance with theories, of the correctness of which we may be more than doubtful. I have heard much of what you term spiritual agency;—have pondered over the efflux and influx of both the older and younger Platonism; have waded through an infinite number of demonologies, not forgetting the comprehensive Reginald Scott; and finally, I have read both Emanuel Swedenburgh and the *Compte de Gabalis*. '

" ' Enough; you convince me that you have much to learn, and something to unlearn; and a part of the latter may consist in a disposition to indulge in some very indifferent humour. But it might be difficult, probably impertinent, to convince you of this truth, and therefore we will drop the subject. '

" This speech, with which I was not overpleased, was delivered rather more pleasantly than its tenor imported; and was, moreover, accompanied by the offer of a conciliating pinch of snuff.

" I accepted of the civility, and bowed without reply, to the great disappointment of several auditors, who were prepared for some curious disputation. For controversy, however, my then state of mind was by no means favourable; nor, to say the truth, was I altogether satisfied with my own *Organic* proposition. More than all, I had no inclination to indulge several pert young students and witlings, with the exhibition either of myself, or of my opponent. The conversation, therefore dropped, and the stranger soon after withdrew. He had, however, scarcely departed five minutes, when I received the following singular note.

" ' When I tell you that I am fully acquainted with your present inquietude, on account of the conduct of an unsteady young man, and consequently with the state of mind which led to our recent conversation, you may possibly be induced to accept an offer which I now make, to convince you, promptly and efficaciously, that things may exist, of which all the Colleges in Europe are *more than doubtful*. '

I reside three doors to the right of the house in which you are now seated ; where, if disposed for conviction, you will call on me to-morrow morning, precisely at nine.—
ZAPORO.’ ”

“ I read this billet once or twice, and confess that I began shrewdly to suspect that my learned antagonist was a designing adventurer, with whom it would be advisable to have nothing more to do. Yet how could he so well fathom my state of mind in regard to Albert, the particular mention of whom strongly excited my curiosity ; possibly some disclosure was intended of a nature to serve *him*. The appointment too, was to take place in the day time, in a public, creditable neighbourhood ; in addition to all which, it was impossible so entirely to disregard Lavater, as not to be impressed with the noble physiognomy of the extraordinary stranger. Contrary, therefore, to my first impression, I determined to accept the invitation ; and conformably to the inconsistency usual in similar conflicts of mind, I could scarcely sleep during the night, owing to my anxious wish for morning, and the solution of the mystery.

“ The next day I rose early, and leaving a note for Albert, to announce my reluctant intention to seek an interview with his father before it was over, I proceeded, at the appointed hour, to the stranger’s lodgings. To my surprise, they were not only handsome, but magnificent ; and on giving my name as a visitor to Mr. Zaporo, I was told that the *Count* had left orders for my admission. I was accordingly ushered into his presence without delay. He received me politely, but with more of dignity than ceremony ; and when I had seated myself, with the air of a man who scarcely knew on what account he was present, he thus promptly addressed me :—

“ ‘ You are welcome, Sir ; and not the less so because I can read what is passing in your mind. You fear that I may be a *Chevalier d’Industrie*, and the supposition is excusable. My motive for wishing to see you is, notwithstanding, very simple. I found you free at least from the arrogance and conceit of *modern* learning, and less injured than many others, by the dull dabbling with matter which forms its degrading pride and distinction.’

“ I bowed, and looking incredulous, muttered something about engagements precluding new studies or any laborious examination of erudite systems—

“ ‘ Be not alarmed, I wish to propose nothing of the kind ; I have no intention to combat reason, but to command belief?’——This was uttered with inconceivable *sang froid*, and I suppose that I again looked suspectingly.

“ ‘ When, in the language of the great English Dramatist, you are satisfied that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in *your* philosophy, you may possibly wish to know more of *mine*. Therefore to convince you, and that summarily, is all my present purpose.—You have left your precious ward in bed ?’

“ ‘ I have.’

“ ‘ He will soon rise, and you will be absent. Do you wish to witness his conduct for a day ?’

“ ‘ I fear that I am but too well acquainted with it.’

“ ‘ Psha ! That you are generally well acquainted with the follies

of a boy of quality, indulged into more than usual imbecility, I am aware; but reverting to our last night's conversation, would you wish to be acquainted with the influences which surround him?"

" 'Certainly, if—'

" 'Nothing conditional, follow me and behold them.'

"The stranger led the way to an inner apartment: it was a noble library, but no otherwise remarkable, except that one end of the room was concealed by a magnificent black silk curtain, before which stood a kind of elevated throne, or canopied chair, decorated with similar silken and sable splendour.

" 'I am studiously anxious to avoid alarming you into an apprehension either of trickery or mummery,' said the Count, 'and therefore when I tell you, that all I require from you is, a quiet observance from that seat of the scenes that will present themselves when the curtain is withdrawn, nothing more will be necessary to satisfy you that I am no disciple of Reginald Scott. When I add, that you are not to look behind you, which indeed the form of the chair renders difficult, you are only to understand, that the penalty of doing so will simply put an end to your entertainment; nothing more.'

"Now the Chariatanism commences, thought I to myself, or else the intellects of my new friend are somewhat disordered. No matter, he can have no object in personally injuring me; and I may as well carry off appearances with a good grace. With this reflection I stepped on to the chair.

"The moment I took my seat, the stranger moved towards the curtain, and placed his hand upon the large silken tassel which was designed to draw it up. His face was averted; but his whole frame appeared in tremulous agitation, and a few inarticulate and scarcely audible accents reached my ear. He then turned round, his fine countenance beamed with emotion, his dark eye shot inexpressible fire—

" 'Risberg, behold your Telemachus!'

"At that moment the curtain drew up, and conceive my astonishment at discovering that the entire end of the room was apparently composed of looking-glass; which, however, instead of reflecting the objects opposed to it, presented to my scarcely-believing eyes the dressing-room of Albert Von F. into which the imprudent youth appeared to have just entered from his bed-chamber, his person exhibiting all the fatigue and listlessness which usually attend a preceding night of excess and dissipation.

" 'Great God, what do I behold?' exclaimed I, half starting from my seat.

" 'Be calm and attentive; and no more exclamation, as you value the gratification of your curiosity.'

"I obeyed these directions by remaining silent; but I was extremely agitated, and a tremor seized my whole frame.

" 'A few words more, Risberg. Temporarily endowed with the most precious gift of the divinest philosophy, you will shortly behold appearances, which you must endeavour to comprehend by your own unaided sagacity. Your success I doubt not, because it will be materially assisted by your knowledge of your pupil. Once more, and finally,

I conjure you to be firm, for I must now retire, and the scene will be extraordinary.'

"I bowed assent by a slight inclination of my head, and Zapor, repeating his admonition to silence by significantly placing his finger to his lip, deliberately proceeded to the door, and left the room.

"I cannot say that the retreat of my mysterious host added to my composure; but I had no time to waste in vague conjecture upon the purity of his motives, being called upon to attend to a species of phantasmagoria of the most whimsical yet awe-inspiring description.

"Whilst looking earnestly at the shadow of the conscience-stricken Albert, I beheld the visionary room which he occupied gradually pervaded by a bluish silvery mist, so light and attenuated, that it in no respect obscured either the person of my pupil, or any other object in the apartment. At the same time, although perfectly distinguishable by any sense of vision, Albert and his attendants seemed altogether unconscious of its existence. Whilst pondering upon this phænomenon, to my infinite surprise, I thought that I could discern the lineaments of human countenances occasionally peep through the mist, and as capriciously retreat again. Sometimes these features, which presented every variety of expression, were nearly distinct; at others, so faint as to be scarcely perceptible. For several minutes I discovered countenances only; but after awhile, I could perceive winged forms entire, which at will seemed to step in and out of the cognizance of my eyesight. Not only did I distinguish them separately, but in parties, most fantastically linked together by means that the peculiar atmosphere, in which they appeared to envelope themselves at pleasure, would not allow me to ascertain. The effect was various beyond describing; now beautiful; now half-disgusting; now solemn; now whimsical; now grotesque. Features the most grave, the most mirthful, the most composed, and the most vivacious in their expression, often mingled in one grouping; but when this was the case, the serious were usually very distinct, and the gay proportionately faint; and, *vice-versa*, although even this remark will not generally apply. In one or two instances, I detected an arch countenance peering by the side of a severe one, and a lowering set of features strangely connected with a constellation of gay ones. I have already observed, that for the most part the faces only were distinguishable; but in the instances where more of the form became visible, the vestment and costume were as capricious as their features. The motes in the sunbeam could not shine with more vivid hues, or changeable lustre, than some of these sprites; and the habiliments of others were equally sombre and gloomy. Their most surprising property, however, consisted in their gradational and ever-varying distinctness, which bore some resemblance to the approach or departure of the human figure in a dewy fog, or the form of sportive fish in a glassy stream, which is more or less obscure, according to their distance from the surface. The extreme delicacy of the fainter apparitions conveyed an idea of tinted air; whilst the more strongly marked shadows assumed the outline and force of substantial physical existence. I have informed you that Albert seemed utterly unconscious of the intelligences by which he was surrounded, but, left to my own unaided conjecture, as I was, I was quickly convinced that they were intimately connected

with his mind and conduct. Upon the slightest motion of his, a species of evolution took place ; some that were distinct faded, and others, before invisible, started into visible being—”

“ ‘ Guardian angels, I suppose,’ said Alfman to his friend, with a smile !”

“ ‘ Say attendant spirits,’ replied Risberg, gravely.”

“ ‘ Whatever *you* please, Risberg.’ ”

“ ‘ Await the sequel.’ ”

[To be concluded next week.]

DR. BURNET'S APOLOGY FOR MOSES.

IN a former number we gave a specimen of Dr. Burnet's dramatic talent in the dialogue between Eve and the Serpent, extracted from his *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*. As this book is but little known, and has never appeared in an English dress, we shall proceed to give a few more extracts from the chapter in which he examines the Mosaic account of the creation. The freedom with which this subject is treated by one of the most pious and orthodox divines of the Church, and the most intimate friend of one of its greatest ornaments, Archbishop Tillotson, may afford a salutary lesson to those who imagine that no part of the Scriptures can be safely impugned, and that free inquiry cannot be indulged in without endangering the whole fabric of our religion. Dr. Burnet's sole aim in this and in all his writings was, as he himself declares, to promote the piety which is founded in truth. In the prosecution of this object he sometimes uses language and arguments, which, we doubt not, Dr. Southey and the Chancellor would declare to be blasphemous, if they could be entrapped into giving an opinion upon them without knowing that they proceeded from one of the pillars of the Church. The Doctor (not the Laureat) seems to have had a strong sense of the ludicrous side of an argument, and perceiving the advantage which some parts of the first chapters of Genesis might give to the enemies of Christianity, if the whole narrative of Moses were maintained to be historically true, he has dexterously anticipated his opponents, by displaying, in the strongest light, the absurdities to which we should be driven by adopting a literal interpretation. Fully acknowledging the divine inspiration of Moses, and retaining the essential part of the narrative (namely, the prophesy that the Devil, of whom the serpent is symbolical, should be bruised, or that mankind should be redeemed by the seed of the woman) he rejects all the details against which reason and common sense revolt, and has not hesitated to admit that they might be considered fabulous, if found in a profane writer. Secure of the strength of the foundation, he has not scrupled to throw down the artificial fabric which has been raised upon it, in order to accommodate the apprehensions of the vulgar. By employing the most unsparing ridicule against the champions of a literal interpretation, he has deprived the Infidel of his most formidable weapon, and by admitting that such an interpretation is against reason, he has left him nothing to attack, except that which is “*above human reason*,” and which (as Gibbon remarks) cannot therefore be affected by his assaults.

“ Eve gave the apple to her husband, and urged him to eat it. Adam, too indulgent to his spouse, complied, and as soon as he had

eaten it, he and his wife, for some reason which is not explained, began for the first time to be ashamed of their nakedness, and sewing together some fig-leaves, they made themselves small-cloaths (*fecerant sibi subligacula*) to conceal it. In the evening, God came down into the garden; whereupon our parents fled, and sought to hide themselves in the bushes, but in vain; for God cried out, Adam, where art thou? Adam came forward, trembling, and said to God, When I heard your voice in the garden, I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself among the bushes. Who has told you, said God, that you were naked? Have you eaten of the fruit which I forbade you to eat?—The woman whom you gave me, said Adam, brought it to me, and I ate it.—You and your wife* have attended prettily to my commands. What have you to say for yourself, woman?—Your serpent gave it to me, and I ate it.—This apple will cost you dear; not only you, but your posterity, and the whole human race shall suffer for it. For this offence I will curse the earth, and destroy the whole economy of nature. Thou, wicked beast, shalt be punished for thy malice, for thou shalt henceforth go upon thy belly, and shalt eat, not apples, but the dust of the earth. Thou, Eve, as a punishment for thy curiosity, shalt bring forth children in pain, and bear the yoke of thy husband. As for you, Adam, since you have hearkened to your wife instead of obeying my commands, you shall obtain food for her and her children by the sweat of your brow, instead of enjoying the spontaneous fruits of the earth. Henceforth the earth, accursed for your offence, shall yield thistles, and thorns, and noxious weeds, and when you shall have closed a painful and wearisome existence, dust you are and to dust you shall return. In the mean time I will take care that you be expelled from this garden, that you may not eat of the tree of life, and so live for ever.—However, that they might not perish by the inclemency of the weather, God made them garments from the skins of animals, and after he had clad them in this manner, he expelled them from Paradise. Lastly, to prevent the possibility of their return, he placed Angels at the entrance of his garden, who, waving about a flaming sword, guarded the way which led to the tree of life.”

This is the substance of the Mosaic account of Paradise, and the fate of our first parents, which I have given in language somewhat different from that of the sacred historian, strictly adhering, however, to the sense, in order that we may judge of the whole story with as much freedom as if it were related by a modern author.

The narrative consists of five or six parts:—First, the origin and formation of man; secondly, the description of the Garden of Eden; thirdly, the account of the two trees of life and of death; the fourth part treats of Eve's conversation with the serpent, or snake; the fifth, of God's anger and the curse which he pronounced upon all mankind, because the forbidden apple was eaten; the sixth gives an account of the expulsion of our first parents from the garden of God, and how God made them garments out of the skins of beasts, and placed Angels, with flaming swords, at the entrance of the garden to prevent their return.

* The original has been somewhat softened. The divine's words are—*Probe non carasti, tu et tua! Heus tu muliercula! Hark'ye, my little woman!*

The force of habit and preconceived notions on the human mind is surprising. We receive this short account of the origin of the world and of mankind from the mouth of Moses, and we acquiesce in it upon his authority without pause, or examination. If we had read such an account in any other writer, in the works of a Grecian philosopher for instance, or of a Rabbinical or Mahomedan doctor, the mind would have stopped short at every period, and started a thousand doubts and objections. This difference does not arise from the nature of the subject, but from our opinion of the credit and authority of a writer divinely inspired. I readily admit the divine inspiration of Moses, nor is it the object of this inquiry to question his authority, but to consider the *animus* or intention with which he wrote this account, and whether he has employed a popular or a philosophical style of composition; I say a popular, not a fabulous style, although the term fabulous might be appropriately used, if we were considering the works of a profane writer.

That man was created between five and six thousand years ago, is a fact which rests upon the authority of Scriptural chronology, and which I have never doubted; but of what material the first man or woman was made, is a point of somewhat greater difficulty. If God chose to make a woman out of Adam's rib, it certainly seems an inconvenient material, but God could no doubt make a woman out of a stick, a stone, or any other material. It is a subject of inquiry among the curious, whether this rib of Adam's was a supernumerary rib, and one which was not required in a perfect body. If it were not a supernumerary rib, Adam would have been maimed by its subtraction, and despoiled of a necessary part of his body. I say a *necessary* part, because we suppose that there was nothing superfluous in the structure of the human body, and that no bone or part could be taken away without injury to the whole. If, however, it is contended that this rib of Adam's was supernumerary and useless, and that he had thirteen on one side and twelve on the other, this would make the first man a sort of monster, such as he would have been had he been created with three feet or three hands, or with a greater number of eyes, or other members than was necessary to the usefulness and perfection of the human body. I do not pretend to settle this question, but there is another difficulty which gives me more anxiety, namely, how the whole female body could be made out of a single rib? for a rib does not equal the hundredth or thousandth part of the whole body; and if it be said that other materials were employed, then Eve would be more truly said to be formed of those other materials than of Adam's rib. I am aware that the Rabbinical doctors explain the whole matter in a different manner. They say, that the first man had a double body, part male and part female, one sticking to the sides, or, as some other divines contend, to the nether ends of the other, and that God cut him asunder and gave Eve, after her separation, in marriage to Adam. Plato has a story very similar to this in his *Symposium* about the first man Androgynus, who was afterwards divided into a male and female.

We pass over the examination of the difficulties about the locality of God's garden in Eden, which some suppose to be the same as the *Διὸς κήπον* in Plato, and proceed to the analysis of Eve's dialogue with the serpent.

This story of the serpent, which addressed Eve, and tempted her to

disobey God, is certainly very marvellous. We know not whether the serpent had naturally the faculty of talking, or of producing any sound, beyond the hissing noise which is all it can achieve in these days. What shall we suppose Eve to have known about this matter? If she considered it a dumb animal, the very circumstance of its entering into conversation with her must have alarmed a timid female, and deterred her from continuing so monstrous an intercourse. But if the serpent talked at its creation, and lost the gift of speech for its wickedness in corrupting Eve, Moses would not have failed to mention this punishment, nor would he have substituted in its place the lighter inconvenience of being condemned to lick the dust. Again, will it be contended that the race of serpents alone, or that all beasts had the gift of speech in Paradise, like the talking trees in the grove of Dodona? If they all talked, what have the rest done, that they too should lose the gift of speech? If serpents alone enjoyed this privilege, how shall we account for this distinction having been specially conferred upon an animal of such a nasty description, and so utterly unlike the human species?

But I can easily conceive that the champions of a literal interpretation will be ready to solve this difficulty in another way. They will tell us that the devil or an evil demon concealed himself under the form of a serpent, and that using the mouth and other organs of that animal, he addressed the woman, as if with the human voice. But on what testimony or authority is this assertion made? Certainly the literal text of Moses, of which they are so tenacious, does not warrant it. The text ascribes the ruin of Eve entirely to the natural cunning of this animal. Now the serpent, says Moses, was the subtlest beast of the field which the Lord God had made; and then adds, 'and he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said,' &c. Besides, if the serpent spoke by the agency of an evil demon, Eve would have fled with terror when she heard a dumb animal address her. But so far is she from shewing any alarm, that she receives it with perfect familiarity; they enter into conversation, and discuss the question of the forbidden fruit as if nothing new or extraordinary had happened. If it be said that all this proceeded from the ignorance and weakness of the woman, surely it would have been but fair, that some assistance should have been given by good angels to a weak and ignorant woman against the wiles of the craftiest animal of the creation. Impartial spectators of human affairs would not have permitted so unequal a contest. Was it surprising that a weak woman, who had not yet seen the sun rise or set (as will be afterwards shewn) just brought into the world, and wholly destitute of experience, should be overcome by the craft of an evil demon, skilled in the exercise of the treacherous arts which he practised against her? Surely so cherished a being as the first woman formed by the hand of God, on whom the prosperity of the whole human race depended, deserved the protection of his angels.

But, it may be said, the woman ought to have taken care not to violate a law, to the breach of which was annexed the punishment of death. 'The day you eat thereof you shall surely die.' But what could Eve understand by the punishment of death, who had never seen any thing dead, not even a flower; and upon whose eyes sleep, the image of death, had not closed, as she had not yet passed a night in Paradise?

The punishment of the serpent again involves us in further difficulties. If the devil transacted the whole business in the form of a serpent, and compelled that animal to be the ostensible deceiver, why should the serpent suffer for the crime of the devil? Then with respect to the mode and form of the punishment inflicted on the serpent, it is not easy to explain what this means. It can scarcely be supposed that the serpent was erect, and walked like a quadruped before this transaction; and if it went upon its belly from the beginning, like a modern snake, it seems absurd that its natural mode of conveying itself from place to place, should be declared to be the punishment of its treachery. But enough of the Woman and the Serpent; let us proceed to the Trees.

There were two trees, we are told, in the garden; the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of the last tree seems to have introduced our first parents to a new sense of shame or nakedness, as it is called. The order of things is inverted since the fall. Our first parents had no modesty (*nullum pudorem in rebus veneris*) before they were plunged in sin by eating an apple; in these days, a modest reserve in these particulars more commonly attends a state of innocence than a lapse from that state. Another peculiarity in this tree is noticed by God, when he says, 'Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil;' meaning that this knowledge was acquired by virtue of the apple. Now the vicious passions and inordinate desires which the eating of the apple is supposed to have engendered, so far from rendering us like God, ought rather to have produced a totally opposite effect.

However, when they had eaten the apple, our parents, it seems, became ashamed of their nakedness, and made themselves small-cloaths. So says the text; 'they sewed together some fig-leaves, and made themselves small-cloaths.' Here we have the origin of the art of sewing; but where could they get the needles and thread on the first day of the creation, before the arts of making thread or steel were invented? It may be thought that I am pursuing this inquiry with too much freedom; but freedom is necessary, when we are endeavouring to investigate the truth. To proceed, then; when they made themselves small-cloaths, God also gave them garments made out of the skins of animals. Here again we incur fresh difficulties. Let us suppose, in order to soften matters a little, that an angel did this instead of God. Then one of two things follow: either the angel must have slain and skinned the animals, or he must have stripped off the skins from the innocent creatures alive. But this is surely the work of a butcher or hangman, not of an angel. Besides, from this butchery whole races of animals must have perished, because only two of each species were created, and a single animal could not have propagated its kind, unless we are to suppose that the angel had special instructions to leave a pregnant female. Let us, however, suppose all this, and what follows? God drove our parents, thus furnished with skins, out of Paradise, and placed cherubim at the entrance of his garden, with a flaming sword, let they should endeavour, by force or stratagem, to re-enter the blissful abode. What man in his senses can interpret all this literally, and seriously believe that God placed angels to guard the entrance of a garden, like sentinels with drawn swords, or like the dragons which, in the fable of the poets, guarded the apples of the

Hesperides? But this and similar topics, lest they should seem irreverent, I would rather leave to be considered by others.

One other topic only remains, I mean the very small space of time in which all these transactions are supposed to have passed, namely, the space of one day, or perhaps of half a day. The most approved Divines suppose that Adam consummated his marriage with Eve on the first night. Then, they argue, that if Eve, while yet in a state of innocence, conceived her first-born son, that son would also have been innocent, and free from the stain of his mother's offence, as would also his issue have been, at least on the paternal side. Now experience shews that there are no people in the world in a state of semi-purity; we are all alike subject to disease and death. Therefore, say the divines, it is demonstrated that all these transactions took place on the first day of the creation, before the celebration of the genial rites of marriage. Let us pause for a moment, and consider the number of events which occurred on this busy day. On this day, God created all manner of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles; and lastly, he created Adam. When he had done all this, he summoned every species of animal before Adam, that they might all receive their names. What language Adam used does not appear; however, when we consider the immense variety in the several classes and species of animals, we may conclude that it took a considerable time to form an estimate of all their peculiarities, and apply a judicious nomenclature to every living thing. This being accomplished, however, God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and while he was in that state, took one of his ribs from him, and made a woman out of it. On the same day, the man and the woman thus made out of his rib were married without any of the bridal ceremonies, or frigid delays of modern courtships (*sine frigidis sponsorum ambagibus*). On the same day, the new-married lady rambles into a remote part of the garden, and happens to meet a serpent. The serpent and the woman enter into a conversation about eating the fruit of a certain tree, which finishes by her yielding to the solicitations of that animal, and by her persuading her husband to participate in the crime of eating an apple. Immediately a great change takes place. They both become conscious of their nakedness, and make themselves small-cloaths, by sewing together some fig-leaves. This must have been the work of some hours. In the evening God comes down into the garden; our guilty parents attempt to conceal themselves, but in vain, for God cites them into his presence, and punishes all the parties, as we have before seen. All this is done in the space of a single day; and one cannot but feel some affliction, when one sees the whole order of nature inverted and destroyed in so short a space of time, and for a cause, to our apprehensions, so trifling and ridiculous. In the morning, we are told, God said every thing was good, and in the evening every thing was execrable. Frail indeed is the glory of created things, if a work which cost Omnipotence six days to perform, was subverted and destroyed in little more than the same number of hours, because a serpent persuaded the first woman to eat an apple!

When I candidly revolve all these considerations in my mind, I confess that I cannot be displeased with those ancient writers who have endeavoured to represent the account of Paradise and our first

parents in the light of a popular story, or parable. I am undoubtedly displeased with Celsus, who has called it 'an old woman's story,' *μυθον τινα ως γραιυσι διηγημενον*;—to which Origen replies with becoming piety, that these things are to be understood *tropically* (*μετα τροπολογιας*). Indeed Celsus himself is afterwards obliged to admit that the more judicious interpreters, Jewish as well as Christian, were ashamed of a literal interpretation, and resorted to allegory. With regard to these and other particulars in the narrative of Moses, let every man enjoy his own opinion, provided he do not destroy the foundation. By the foundation, I mean the doctrine of the creation of the world and of mankind within a given time; of man's subsequent degeneracy, and the prophecy of his redemption through the seed of the woman. We are all liable to error in this our blind state of mortality, and among the various offices of charity, mutual indulgence to the errors and failings of each other is not the least. In the mean, time I call God, who knows the hearts and thoughts of men, to witness, that I have had no other design in this, or in any other of my writings, than to promote the piety which is founded in truth.

TABLE TALK.

HUDIBRAS.—Some curious literary correspondencies occasionally take place; the reason Butler gave for calling his poem *Hudibras* was because the old tutelar Saint of Devonshire was *Hugh de Bras*. Colonel Rolle, however, a Devonshire man, is believed to have been the real original of the redoubtable knight; which tradition, if correct, recalls to mind *The Rolliad*, the satire of which was a gratuitous favour bestowed on a member of the same family now became noble. We could mention more families than the Devonshire, Somersetshire, or Cornish Rolles, who might furnish hereditary objects of satire.

OLD STYLE IN RUSSIA.—“Why is the old style still preserved in Russia?”—Answer by a witty foreigner: “In order that they may believe themselves only twelve days behind the rest of Europe, whereas their arrears exceed a century.”

CLOCKS.—Dante is said to have been the first author who has introduced the mention of a clock that struck the hour, in the following lines—

“Inde come horologio che ne chiami,
Nel hora, che la sposa d'Idio surge
A mattinar, lo sposo, perche l'ami.”

We know of no invention which has added more largely to our domestic associations than the striking clock. In the silent hours of the night, how impressive is the notice which it conveys, marking the fugitive present, and proclaiming the never-to-be-recalled past, with simple but most emphatic eloquence! “We take no note of time,” says Young, “but from its loss;” he means in the day time, and in full occupancy; but he who from worldly anxiety, sickness, or other causes, cannot secure the visits of “tired nature's sweet restorer” in due season, forms a perfectly distinct idea of duration—an idea, by the way,

which when it ceases to be abstract, becomes purely relative. Shakspeare informs us with whom time lags, gallops, and so on; and we all recollect the Turkish tale quoted in the *Spectator*, of a Sultan, whom a Dervise induced to dip his head in a tub of water; and who, in the momentary interval before he took it out again, was made to conceive the events of half a life time. This was to convince the honest Sultan, who was slightly sceptical, that Mahomet could see all the fine things in one night, which might be supposed to occupy several. The thought is ingenious; and, if time be measurable by the succession of ideas in the individual, philosophically grounded. But to return to the clock—the most forcible rhetorical use ever made of it in our estimation, was by a certain French Abbé (we write from recollection) who wishing to impress upon his auditors a more complete idea of everlasting torment, requested them to suppose its endurance in awful silence, with the single exception of a clock, the ticking of whose pendulum would eternally seem to exclaim *ever, ever, ever, always, ever*—An oratorical trick, but under the theory, a well imagined one; a clock, not to mark time, but to pronounce *Eternity*. Madame de Stael quotes a German dream possessing a similar sort of interest; both the notions being founded on privations; the one, of time properly so called; the other, of all kind of guardianship in the form of God, or Providence. Lord Byron's *Darkness*, again, is of a kindred class of powerfully conceived negation—But where are we wandering to? The clock strikes, and we conclude.

WISDOM AND LOVE.—“The ancients,” says a Prussian author, “were strange people in their mythology,—they exalted *Woman* into *Wisdom*, and mistook *Man* for *Love*.” We may possibly add, and thereby pleased neither side.

BOTTLED VITALITY.—That half-madman Paracelsus, when people began to doubt the existence of fairies, *et hoc genus omne*, boldly undertook to make one. The process he laid down was curious, if not very delicate. The *elementary matter* was to be collected in a phial, and deposited in fuming dung; but even this plan we prefer to the charnel-house doings of the student Frankenstein. In due time the vivifying principle would burst the glass, in the manner of an egg-shell, and, like Asmodeus from the phial of the Spanish magician, the elemental mannikin or fairy would appear *in propria personâ*. At Dr. Farmer's sale, this recipe for making a fairy in the works of Paracelsus, was doubly folded down by the learned commentator; and had they been purchased by Dr. Darwin, there is little doubt but that the experiment would have been made. To prove the existence of this elemental vitality, one Gaffarel asserts, that a heavy rain in Poitou showered down ‘*petites bestioles*,’—little creatures, like bishops with their mitres and monks with their capuchins over their heads, who all subsequently turned into *butterflies*! We suspect that a similar shower once fell in Ireland, with the exception of the change into butterflies. In that unhappy island, the ‘*bestioles*’ remain grubs to this hour, and make a sad havoc with the produce of the land.

THE RISE OF NATIONS AND LANGUAGES.—The following parallel, published by Sismondi in his *Literature of the South of Europe*, is ingenious and correct:—"Charlemagne and all his court spoke German; whilst the Romance was, very generally, the dialect of the people throughout all the South of France. Nothing can give a more correct idea of the mode in which a new language is thus formed by a barbarous nation who inherit the institutions of a civilized people, than the process which we see, at the present day, taking place at St. Domingo. There the French is what the Latin was in Europe till the 8th century; the African languages are the Teutonic dialects; and the Creole is the Romance. If, in future times, the Creole should become a polished language, abounding in orators and poets, its history in these times will present the same obscurity and the same contradictions which perplex us with regard to the origin of the Romance. We see, in like manner, in St. Domingo, the Jaloff, the Mandingo, and the other African languages, abandoned by the conquerors, whose mother tongues they are; the Creole universally employed without being written, and the French reserved for the acts of Government, its proclamations, and its journals."

GOOD WITS JUMP.—Paley has been called the Protestant Jesuit; and it must be admitted, that we are now and then reminded by him of that jesuitical casuistry, which Pascal so admirably put down. Paley, for instance, discountenances the weak notion, that it is better that twenty guilty persons should escape, than one innocent individual suffer. Due care, he candidly observes, should be taken *not* to hang *innocent* persons lightly; but all the proceedings being legitimate and proper, it amounts only to this, that the said innocent persons have "*died for the good of their country*." For the credit of the Church of England, we exceedingly regret that the doctrine is not original; for it seems that during the war against the Albigenses, Arnold, Abbot of the Cisterneaux, was so impressed, like Dr. Paley, with the folly of letting the guilty escape out of tenderness to the innocent, that when he was asked, before the city of Beziers was stormed, how he could separate the heretics from the Catholics, he meekly replied, "Kill them all; God will know who belongs to him;"—that is to say, he was for making *martyrs* by the same recipe as Paley would make *patriots*. What things men in gowns have said and done!

DEVOTION AND BUSINESS.—We seldom meet with a finer instance of honest and primitive simplicity, than the recorded practice in the churches of Finland. Previous to the concluding prayer of divine service, the ministers read out with an audible voice, a list of the births, deaths, and marriages; after which follows a statement of the sales of houses made or about to be made, and an account of the unclaimed letters at the Post-office. From all this we gather that the Fins want nothing in the world but a newspaper; but their new Sovereign Alexander dislikes newspapers, so they must continue to mingle heavenly and earthly speculation as before.

L— CASTLE.

With a warm heart o'erthronged with many a fear,
 In childhood I beheld this lonely pile
 Stirring poetic thoughts—from year to year
 It caught the evening moon's pale silver smile,
 And seemed enthroned in mystery; the while
 The ascetic owl poured forth his sullen shriek,
 And from its crannied base or chappelled aisle
 Forth darted the dim bat, with vision weak,
 Skimming along the wave which at its foot did break.

And close upon the skirt of eve there came
 The fisher's skiff, with soal or turbot fraught,
 Cleaving the wave crested with phosphor flame,
 Which, leaning o'er the prow, his urchin caught
 In unburnt hand—the sire, with riper thought,
 Eying the pole-star or the glittering wain,
 Or, in his rude mythology, the grot
 Beneath the turret, peopling with the train
 Of fairy elves who haunt the margin of the main.

Just then the visions of far Araby
 Had spread their fibres round my fancy's spring,
 And struck deep root; and forth I stole to be
 Free to indulge my fond imagining:
 The oar's light dip—the rustling vulture's wing
 Brushing the ivied tower—the far-off sail
 Glancing athwart the moonlight,—failed to bring
 Other than magic tropes, without the pale
 Of whatsoe'er of true in nature doth prevail.

Genii, magicians, filled the moaning wind
 That came at fits full thro' the ruined wall,
 Which seemed an isthmus reared up by the mind,
 To part the unreal from the natural:
 And if a lapse of sound, perchance let fall
 In the dusk woods behind, at eve were heard,
 Strait'twas the spirit of the breeze's call
 Mustering his brethren, and his very word
 Noted, distinct became, as song of well-known bird.*

But time subdues romance:—by slow degress,
 Like the bright tincture of an evening cloud
 Through which the light is lapsing, on the breeze
 Floated the fairies off—the genii bowed
 Their heads, and, shuffling on their midnight shroud,
 Escaped into the darkness.—All alone,
 At early manhood's dawn, I stood, not proud
 That these my boyhood's visitants were gone,
 But chosing Truth's stern lap to lay my head upon.

R. PERCY.

* A superstition peculiar to that part of the country.

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